

CHAPTER 11.

RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPREST FUNDS

SECTIONS

PURPOSE	1
SCOPE	2
AUTHORITY	3
POLICY	4
EFFECT ON OTHER ISSUANCES	5

11-01 PURPOSE.

This chapter defines the responsibilities for establishing and managing imprest funds by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and its cross-serviced agencies. Detailed procedures and cashier responsibilities are contained in the Department of Commerce (DOC) Cash Management Policies and Procedures Handbook, (CMPPH) Chapter 6, *Cash Held Outside Treasury*. The CMPPH, Chapter 6 may be accessed at http://www.osec.doc.gov/ofm/cash/Ch_6_Cash_Mgmt_Hdbk_Cash_Held_Outside_Treasury_9-30-08.pdf

The Treasury, Financial Management Service, Manual of Procedures and Instructions for Cashiers (Cashier's Manual) may be accessed at http://fms.treas.gov/imprest/cashiers_manual.pdf

11-02 SCOPE.

This policy is applicable to all components of NOAA/cross-serviced agencies to which funds are available.

11-03 AUTHORITY.

Title 31 CFR part 208, *Management of Federal Agency Disbursements*: Final Rule requires that all payments must be made by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) by January 2, 1999. However, exceptions can be granted for (a) hardship on the recipient, (b) impossibility, (c) costs-benefit, or (d) law enforcement and national security. As of October 1, 2001, Federal agencies are required to eliminate imprest funds in accordance with the Treasury Imprest Fund Policy Directive (<http://www.fms.treas.gov/imprest/>).

11-04 POLICY.

ESTABLISHING AND INCREASING IMPREST FUNDS:

As detailed in NOAA Policy Memorandum 08-03 (<http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/~finance/PM-0803.pdf>), any request for the establishment or increase of a NOAA imprest fund must be approved by the Director, NOAA Finance Officer/Comptroller prior to the establishment or increase. Only one imprest fund may be established at any one location. Currently, only NOAA ships have waivers in place to operate imprest funds.

Once operating under such waiver, an imprest fund should satisfy a continuing need for making limited value cash or non-cash disbursements in lieu of processing check disbursements.

SHIP IMPREST FUNDS:

In support of its mission, NOAA operates a fleet of research and survey ships. Each of these ships maintains an imprest fund for making necessary cash disbursements. NOAA Finance policy requires the submission of original imprest fund reimbursement vouchers and supporting documentation for the replenishment of an imprest fund. Since original documentation is only available when a ship is in port, there had been instances where a ship's imprest fund had become depleted (or nearly so) while at sea.

As a result, NOAA Policy Memorandum 08-01 (http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/~finance/PM%2008-01_ShipImprestFundVouchers.pdf) was issued that established policy regarding the submission and processing of electronic copies of NOAA ship imprest fund reimbursement vouchers and supporting documentation.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF APPROVING OFFICIALS AND CASHIERS:

Upon approval of an imprest fund exception, the Director, NOAA Finance Officer/Comptroller shall designate an approving official for the imprest fund. The approving official has the primary responsibility for appointing a cashier and ensuring that the imprest fund is used properly. CMPPH chapter 6 lists the responsibilities of imprest fund approving officials and cashiers.

IMPREST FUND ANNUAL AUDIT:

Chapter 6, section 14.14 of the CMPPH requires that an audit of each imprest fund account be conducted annually. NOAA Policy Memorandum 08-02 (<http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/~finance/08-02pm.pdf>) establishes policy concerning the use of the *Contact Memorandum and Annual Imprest Fund Audit Questionnaire* to facilitate the annual audit of an imprest fund.

IMPREST FUND CONVENIENCE CHECKS:

On April 10, 2009, the DOC Office of Financial Management transferred to the DOC Office of Acquisition Management the management and oversight responsibility for Imprest Fund Replacement Convenience Checking Accounts. As a result, effective June 15, 2009, Agency Program Coordinators (APCs), are responsible for convenience check issuances and oversight, including Imprest Fund Replacement Convenience Checking Accounts.

APCs and convenience check writers shall meet the requirements specified in CAM 1313.301. (<http://oam.ocs.doc.gov/docs/CAM%201313.301%20Revised%20July%2009%20-%20Final.pdf>)

LIQUIDATING IMPREST FUNDS:

See CMPPH, Chapter 6, Section 13.0 for procedures to liquidate imprest funds.

When an imprest fund is not being operated in compliance with the requirements this policy or CMPPH, Chapter 6, it should be liquidated. The primary responsibility for recommending and effecting an involuntary liquidation of an imprest fund rests with the imprest fund approving official. The Finance Office, Financial Policy and Compliance Division (FCPD) may also recommend and effect liquidation of an imprest fund.

Liquidation of an imprest fund can be accomplished by either not replenishing reimbursement vouchers or by billing the imprest fund cashier for the remaining balance. The cash and/or uncashed check(s) must then be immediately returned to the servicing Finance Office Branch.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NOAA FINANCE OFFICE, FINANCIAL POLICY AND COMPLIANCE DIVISION:

The NOAA Finance Office, FCPD is responsible for policy and oversight of imprest funds, but is not responsible for their operation or management. Specifically, the imprest fund responsibilities of the NOAA FCPD include:

- issuing and interpreting policy
- reviewing and referring, when appropriate, requests for changes and exceptions to the policies and procedures contained in CMPPH, Chapter 6 to the DOC Office of Financial Management
- conducting periodic independent reviews of internal controls over the Imprest Fund VISA Convenience Check program
- recommending fund liquidation or reduction when appropriate

11-05 EFFECT ON OTHER ISSUANCES

This chapter supersedes all previous issuances of Chapter 11 of the NOAA Finance Handbook.